[English]

Modification of Mining Act

915. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to modify the Mining Act;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether any steps have been taken in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (d) As per the National Mineral Policy, 1993, the provisions of the Act and the Rules are subject to review from time to time for harmonising them with the policies governing industrial and socio economic development in the country. Amendments to the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and the Rules made thereunder were made in this context earlier in 1994. Various State Governments have been demanding further delegation of powers under the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957. In this context, a Committee has been constituted recently under the Chairmanship of the Secretary (Mines) with Secretaries of Mining and Geology of major mineral producing States etc. as Members to review inter-alia the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to suggest steps to make them further compatible with the changed policies.

Production of Copper

916. SHRI VISHVESHWAR BHAGAT :
SHRI K. PRADHANI :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the copper reserves areas in the country, Statewise;

(b) the different private/public sector Companies dealing with the copper mining and processing;

(c) whether the Government have recently received proposals from the private sector for production of copper;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken thereon;

(e) whether the Government have formulated a scheme to cut down the import of copper and increase its production; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) The total recoverable reserves position of copper ore in the country as on 1.4.94 are placed at 431 million tonnes. The Statewise breakup of recoverable reserves are given below :

	Unit 1000 tonnes
Andhra Pradesh	12028.60
Bihar	116627.00
Gujarat	8124.20
Karnataka	5856.10
Madhya Pradesh	192704.00
Maharashtra	606.40
Meghalaya	616.00
Orissa	3226.50
Rajasthan	89335.70
Sikkim	722.00
Uttar Pradesh	1120.00
West Bengal	79.00

(b) Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) a Public Sector Undertaking is the only unit in the country which is engaged in mining and processing of copper.

(c) and (d) Industrial Policy announced in 1991 envisages that no Industrial Licence is required for production of copper in the country. The National Mineral Policy of 1993 throws open mining of copper to private sector which was reserved exclusively for public sector. In the wake of liberalised policy following new/additional production capacities are under implementation/being planned :-

Sterlite Industries (I) Ltd.	60,000 TPA
Indo Gulf Fertilisers & Chemicals Corpn. Ltd.	100,000 TPA
Metdist Ltd.	150,000 TPA
SWIL Ltd.	50,000 TPA
Hindustan Copper Ltd. (Khetri Expansion)	70,000 TPA
	430,000 TPA

(e) and (f) Consequent to adoption of liberalised policy, import of copper was decanalised so as to make it freely available to domestic industry.

Gauge Conversion

917. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the proposal for the conversion of some narrow-gauga lines in Orissa into broad-gauge have been pending since long;

(b) if so, the reasons for the delay in implementing those proposals;

(c) whether these projects are likely to be completed during the Ninth Five Year Plan period; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in that direction?